/18 cont./

167 461 39. Also flour from a different sack, although tangentially related to what we are dealing with, is the matter of a lack of initiative, lack of ambition, and a lack of appetite for certain temporal well-being, to which they are not accustomed and which consequently they do not miss which should not justly surprise us, since we should never forget that man is a creature of customs. In this sense it is true that the Indian, without realizing it, seems to repeat the adage, which the Holy Books put in the mouth of the fool: "Better is a handful with rest than both hands full with work and vexation of spirit. (Ecclesiastes IV, 6.)

40. For the correct solution of the problem stated, we must keep most in mind that the place where the Indians live ought to be pondered, since not in vain is it said to us that geography is one of the eyes necessary in every treatise on or study of man.

147 a) Obviously in hot climates nobody can carry on the same activity as in cold ones. The wise Creator did not give to the animals of the tropics the same instinct for frugality or storing up that he gave to their congeners in other climates.

251 261 b) Tropical fruits, in general, cannot be stored, but must be consumed at once: thus the more or less remote tendency to gluttony.

251 263 c) The lack of salt similarly does not allow them to store up provisions of the meat of animals for a long time and thus to ration its consumption. Hung game /mosqueadas/ meat or meat cured only with fire does not last indefinitely like salted meat.

221 d) The nonexistence of seasons of strong contrast and well defined does not help man in these lands to precise calculation, thus great abundance and squandering may frequently be followed by great shortage.

433 e) The enormous isolation from centers of commerce, as a final evil, does not allow them to cultivate anything except what they themselves /19/ are going to consume. In general,

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basket (see "Textiles"), woven so as to be extensible, closed at one end and open at the other. Each end has a strong basketwork loop. The tangõi' is filled and the loop at the open (upper) end hung over a protruding beam — such beams are specially provided in the dwelling, workhouse, or both. A pole is then passed through the lower loop and one end tied to an upright post. The preparer (always a woman) then sits on the other end, thus extending the tangõi' and causing it to squeeze the grated casave. The liquid runs out the bottom and is saved.

The nearly dry meal is then sifted through a rectangular basketwork sieve, pangai' (see "Textiles") and is forthwith patted into a thin layer on a large flat stove, puitari, under which a fire is built. The resulting large, thin, circular cake is the casave bread, or casave properly speaking, eke. It is somewhat soft when fresh, but may be dried for conservation and then becomes very hard. To the unaccustomed palate it tastes like a fairly good grade of sawdust, but those who eat it regularly maintain that it has a distinct and agreeable flavor. It is the principal food of the Kamarakotos.

Some of the more southern tribes roast the sifted meal and so preserve it without baking it into loaves or sheets, but the Kamarakotos do not do this.

Among other dishes, first place must be given to a sort of soup or thin stew, kumasa, the so-called "pepper-pot" of travelers, universal among Caribs. This is cooked in an earthenware pot over a firehole. There are innumerable varieties of this dish, which consists of water and peppers, with anything else that happens to be at hand, bits of meat or fish, bones, casave meal, bananas or plantains, etc.

Casave juice, kumachi, is added to this or to any boiled dish as a sort of condiment.[121] Varieties in which any ingredient, other than pepper, predominates may be specially named, e.g. kuratano-kumasa, "plantain soup or stew," just as we name soups. Vegetables, particularly roots like the varieties of Dioscorea, are often boiled whole or in large pieces instead of being mashed into a kumasa. This dish is called putosa, e.g. napuei-putosa, boiled mapueyes. The root vegetables and plantains are also roasted in hot ashes, pusa, e.g. piricha-pusa, roasted yams.

Aside from its use, principally as scraps and bones, in kumasa, meat may be boiled, woto-erindasa, or roasted on a sort of tripod over the fire, woto-kambwõ.

There is no local source of salt and long periods may pass without any being used, but the Kamarakotos are eager for it and have long traded for it through neighboring tribes. Even when available it is used sparingly and the Indians found most of our food so salty as to be inedible. Much of their food is so peppery as to be inedible to us, and the extensive use of peppers doubtless counteracts the flatness of unsalted food. Their root vegetables doubtless naturally contain enough salts to sustain life.

121 [see footnote on p. 321, category 11b – Analyst]

252 Maize, very unimportant to these Indians, is usually grated while still [177] green and made into soup. The Kamarakotos are familiar with the Arawak style of corn preparation, now universal in Venezuela, by hulling it in a mortar, soaking, grinding, and baking in cakes, and they say that they occasionally do this. We did not, however, see any combread or any mortars for hulling corn and I am sure that this is a rarely used and essentially non-Kamarakoto process, borrowed from Arawak neighbors or from the Venezuelans (who had it from the Arawaks).

272 Sugar cane is commonly peeled and chewed and sucked raw, but the 273 juice is also squeezed out and drunk alone or with water, or added to the mash 171 for making alcoholic drinks. It is not boiled down and sugar is not made.[122] ● [263] The press used occurs, with some variations, among many of the Orinoco, 407 Amazon, and Guiana tribes. Like sugar cane, it is doubtless post-Columbian, [171] especially as it serves for nothing else and could not be used to prepare any pre-Columbian native food, but it is widely diffused and shows some distinctive local variation. It consists of an upright post one side of which is cut away excepting for a projecting step or shelf, with a hole through the post above this. The cane is set on this step, a pole passed through the hole, and pressure on the pole crushes the cane. The juice is led to a point at the lower end of the projection whence it drips into a vessel. See Fig. 26.

[126] Nordenskiöld (1930) has shown that such cane presses are widespread in northern South America and he has argued rather conclusively that they represent a true Indian invention made in post-Columbian times to deal with an intro- [117] duced plant. The alternative view that the press was introduced by the Negroes is largely disproven by the fact that no such apparatus exists in Africa, as Nordenskiöld points out, and also by its typically Indian distribution, use among Negroes only by those who have had every opportunity to learn it from Indians, especially Caribs, and use by many Indians who could hardly have received it from Negroes.

177 The fact that foreign types of presses did not spread with the foreign 407 plant for which they are needed can be ascribed to difficulties of material and [401] technique. A wheel mill could successfully be made without iron, but this would be difficult, and the wheel principle is so foreign to the Indians that they seem quite unable to cope with it.[123]

Intoxicants and Narcotics.

273 Distilled liquors and fruit wines are unknown, but fermented starchy drinks are prepared in some variety and great abundance. The essential of all these is that some very starchy food, especially casave but also the various kinds of Dioscorea and maize, are grated mixed with water, and fermented. These may be varied by intermediate processes, strengthened by the addition of cane juice,

122, 123 [see footnotes on p. 321, category 116 – Analyst]

226 824 114 them would be useful and interesting. Even Roth's excellent summary leaves innumerable doubtful points.

226 271 120. The supposed danger from poisoned water in this part of South America is thus a figment of the imagination, even more absurd than the danger of attack with blowguns.

252 263 121. It is almost universally stated that this juice is a deadly poison and that the purpose of squeezing it out is to remove the poison from the grated casave. These statements are misleading. The poison would surely lose its force when the flour was cooked in any case so the pressing is not to remove the poison but merely to obtain a drier flour from which bread can be made. The "deadly poisonous" juice is consumed in enormous amounts by the Indians with no ill effects and is their favorite and most common condiment, rivaled only by peppers. It is always boiled down first, however, and this doubtless destroys any poisonous qualities, whatever they may be.

263 177 122. One or two of the more sophisticated Indians who have seen the crude Venezuelan sugar-loaves, papelón, have attempted to imitate them, but this sporadic effort has, as yet, no significance.

177 401 407 123. An amusing instance is provided by a Taurepán who attempted to devise an imitation of the roll-mill introduced by the missionaries at Santa Elena. He showed us his "invention" with glowing pride, but ruefully confessed that it would not work, as could have been told beforehand by anyone who had grasped the mechanical principles involved.

276 123 124 124. During our stay native habits were disrupted in this respect by the fact that a large stock of cigarettes was used for presents and wages, but I have the impression that smoking, however extensive, is not very intensive, that no one smokes constantly or to excess.

412 125. Which axes, however, may have been used more for such purposes as digging than for cutting.

323 531 415 126. When I asked whether pots are ever painted, it was patiently explained that to do so would be ridiculous since the design would be hidden by soot the first time the pot was used. Pots are used only for cooking, calabashes and baskets being used for all the other purposes for which some Indians use pottery.